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WILD BLUE YONDER

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MY GOD, LODGE, THEY ACTUALLY DESTROYED OUR FUEL BARGE.

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR US?

DEPENDING ON THE VESSEL, DOCTOR, DAYS TO A LITTLE OVER A WEEK OF SUSTAINED FLIGHT.

I SUGGEST ASSEMBLING A POLICE FORCE. I HAVE A LIST OF CANDIDATES.

WE NEED TO CONSOLIDATE FUEL AND FOOD FOR THE EXECUTIONER, A FEW WARSHIPS, AND ESSENTIAL PERSONNEL.

SOME COMMANDERS WILL SEE THIS AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO FLEE.

OUR DECK GUNS WILL MAKE AN EXAMPLE OF THEM.

WE WON'T SHOOT OUR OWN PEOPLE. HOW COULD YOU SUGGEST SOMETHING LIKE THAT?

IT'S MY JOB.

JUST LIKE YOUR JOB IS TO PRESERVE THE FLEET AT ANY COSTS.

THE JUDGE WILL TAKE THE DAWN.

HE'LL COME BACK TO US.

THIS IS NOT HIS FIRST ATTEMPT AT TAKING THE DAWN.

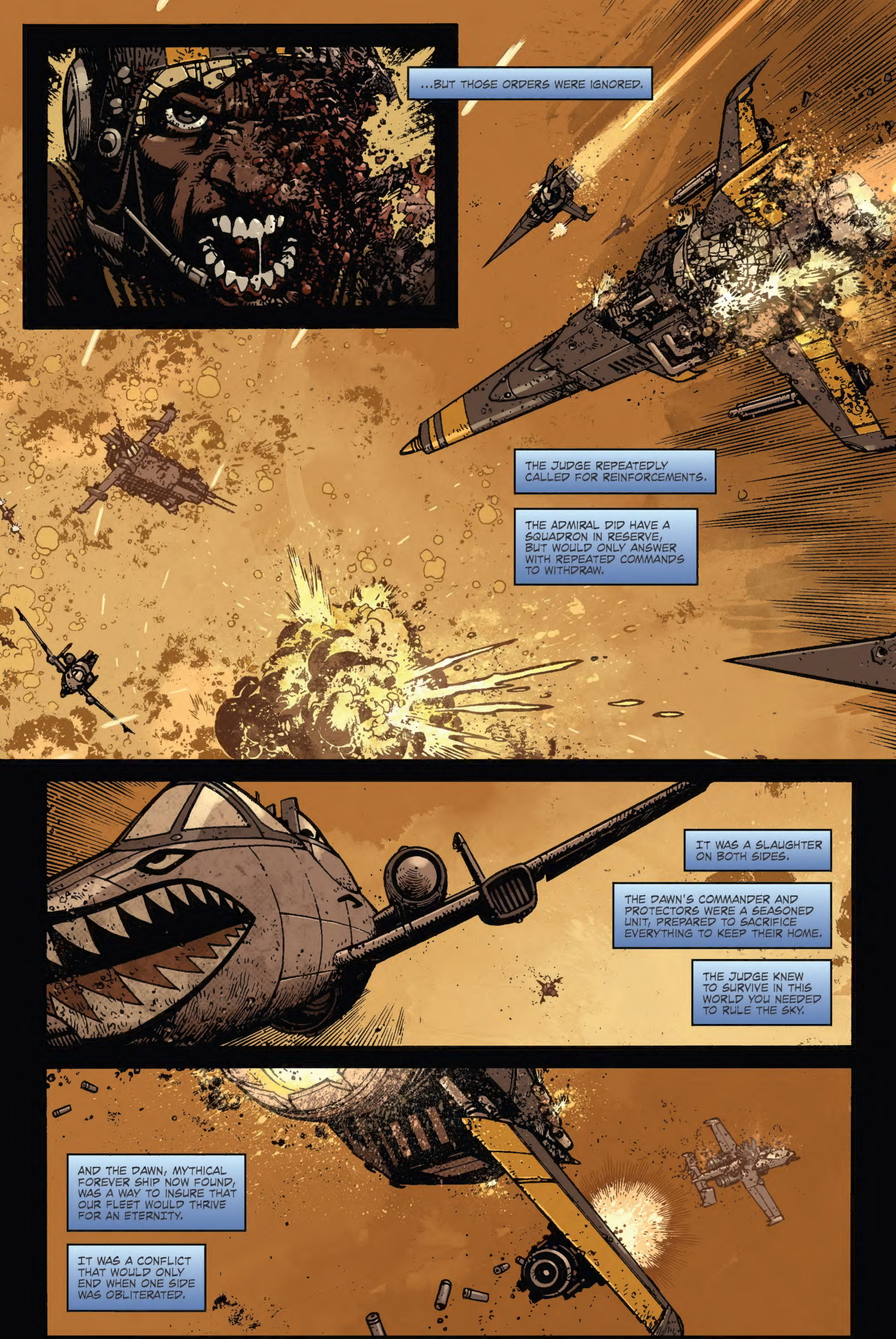
THE JUDGE WAS AN AIR BATTALION COMMANDER THEN.
OUR LEADER, THE ADMIRAL, HAD GROWN OLD AND IN THAT OLD AGE BECAME A GENTLE MAN.
THOSE TYPES OF MEN MAKE LOVING GRANDFATHERS BUT POOR LEADERS.
THE FLEET WAS FLOUNDERING AND WEAK.
UNORGANIZED AND ON THE VERGE OF COLLAPSE.

THE JUDGE WAS A STRONG WARRIOR AND PREACHED EXPANSION AND STRENGTH IN NUMBERS.
SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST.

THE ADMIRAL HALF-HEARTEDLY AGREED.

CHAPTER SIX

THE JUDGE LED A CRUSADE TO EXPAND OUR EMPIRE AND TO FIND THE FOREVER SHIP.
AND WHEN HE FINALLY FOUND THE DAWN, HE LED EVERY VESSEL THE ADMIRAL WOULD ALLOW INTO THE BATTLE TO POSSESS IT.
WHAT CAME NEXT, THE OLD MAN HAD NO STOMACH FOR.
THE ADMIRAL CALLED OFF THE ATTACK...


...BUT THOSE ORDERS WERE IGNORED.
THE JUDGE REPEATEDLY CALLED FOR REINFORCEMENTS.
THE ADMIRAL DID HAVE A SQUADRON IN RESERVE, BUT WOULD ONLY ANSWER WITH REPEATED COMMANDS TO WITHDRAW.
IT WAS A SLAUGHTER ON BOTH SIDES.
THE DAWN'S COMMANDER AND PROTECTORS WERE A SEASONED UNIT, PREPARED TO SACRIFICE EVERYTHING TO KEEP THEIR HOME.
THE JUDGE KNEW TO SURVIVE IN THIS WORLD YOU NEEDED TO RULE THE SKY.
AND THE DAWN, MYTHICAL FOREVER SHIP NOW FOUND, WAS A WAY TO INSURE THAT OUR FLEET WOULD THRIVE FOR AN ETERNITY.
IT WAS A CONFLICT THAT WOULD ONLY END WHEN ONE SIDE WAS OBLITERATED.

WHEN THE JUDGE STOPPED RESPONDING TO THE ADMIRAL'S HAILS TO RETURN WE ASSUMED THE WORST.
WE HAD NO CONCEPT OF *THE WORST.*
THE ADMIRAL WAITED AT THE RENDEZVOUS POINT.
HE SHOULD HAVE RUN.
THE UNIDENTIFIED WRAITH HAS LANDED, ADMIRAL.
THE FLIGHT CREW IS DEALING WITH THE FIRE.
WHO IS IT?
THE PILOT LEFT HIS VESSEL IN THE CHAOS.
HE HAS NOT REPORTED IN.
MY GOD... ALAN.
YOU CAME BACK TO US.

SOMEONE CALL FOR A MEDICAL TEAM.

YOU DIDN'T SEND HELP.

WE'D SACRIFICED SO MANY ALREADY.

WE COULD HAVE LOST THE ENTIRE FLEET TO THOSE BASTARDS.

IT WAS THE WRONG TIME, SON.

BLAM!

ANY OBJECTIONS, HE WHISPERED...
...AND THEN THE JUDGE COLLAPSED RIGHT NEXT TO THE ADMIRAL.
INSTEAD OF EXECUTING HIM FOR TREASON, WE MADE HIM OUR COMMANDER.
HE TOOK A TATTERED FLEET AND CREATED AN ARMADA.
HE HAS MADE EVERY DECISION SINCE THAT DAY.
UNTIL NOW.
WHAT SHOULD I DO?
TELL ME.
I'VE ORDERED THE EXECUTIONER TO TURN IN AN ATTEMPT TO KEEP HER IN RANGE.
THE DAWN WILL NEVER BE THIS CLOSE AGAIN.
TAKE REVENGE.
OPEN FIRE ON HER.
END THIS RIGHT NOW.
WE COULD FOLLOW CLOSE BEHIND THE JUDGE AND--
SHE'S TOO FAST. WE WOULD JUST BE HEMORRHAGING FUEL.
LODGE, DO WE HAVE ANY BOARDING PARTIES LEFT?

THE JUDGE WAS CONVINCED OUR FUTURE WAS ON THAT SHIP. WE HAVE TO GIVE HIM THIS CHANCE.

VERY WELL.

LODGE?

DO YOU READ?

SORRY FOR THE DELAY, SIR.

BOARDING CRAFT 4 DID NOT REACH THE BARGE AND IS BEING SHADOWED BY A WRAITH.

FIVE WAS IN THE PROCESS OF UNLOADING ON THE FUEL BARGE.

THEY HAVE NOT BEEN HEARD FROM SINCE.

VERY WELL. REMAINING WRAITHS, FORM ON ME. WE ARE GOING TO TAKE THE DAWN.

BOARDING CRAFT 4 MUST BE PROTECTED AT ALL COSTS.

THAT MEANS ANYTHING THE DAWN HAS LEFT IN THE SKY IS PRIORITY ONE.

I WILL MAKE A PASS AT THE DECK.

ASSAULT TEAM; KILL ANYONE IN YOUR WAY.

GET OUR PILOTS TO THE COMMAND DECK TO TAKE CONTROL.

WRAITHS, AFTER OUR BOARDING PARTY HAS UNLOADED, YOU WILL LAND ON THE DAWN'S DECK.

WE ARE ALL SOLDIERS NOW.

THEY ARE IN DISARRAY.

THE TIME TO OVERTAKE THEM IS NOW.

COLA, I'VE LOST CONTACT WITH YOU. WHAT'S YOUR POSITION?

I'M CHECKING THE WRECKAGE. I CUT ALONG THE MOUNTAIN.

NO ONE SAW ME.

COLA, I KNOW THIS IS HARD, BUT WE NEED TO LEAVE.

YOU'RE OUR ESCORT.

TUG MIGHT HAVE GOTTEN OUT. I HAVE TO--

COLA? ARE YOU THERE?

WHAT IS IT?

THREE WRAITHS ARE CLOSING ON ME FAST.

I SEE TWO CRAFT HANGING BACK. IT LOOKS TO BE A WRAITH PROTECTING A BOARDING CRAFT.

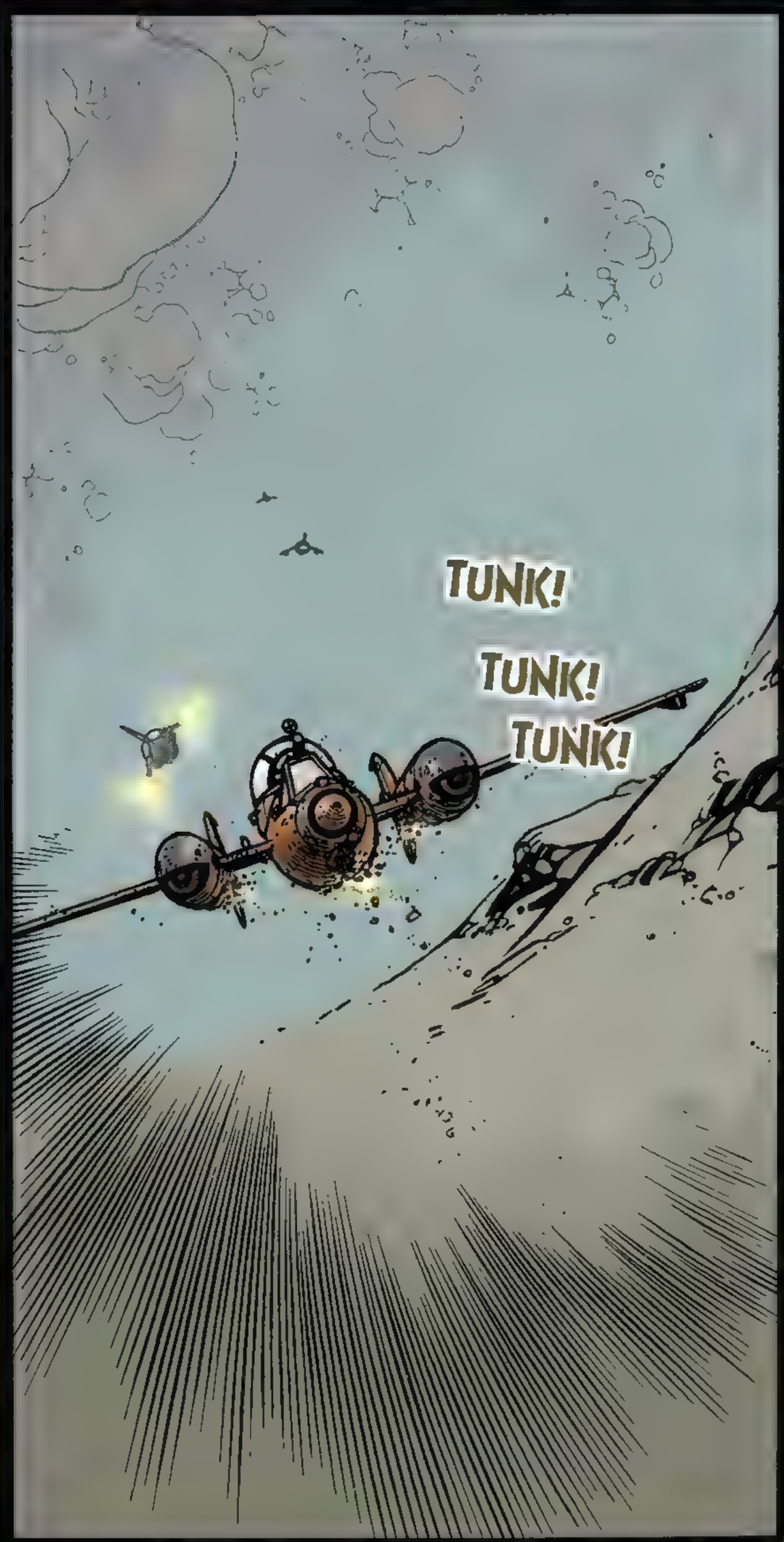
WHERE ARE YOU?

LOW. ABOUT TO CLIMB THE MOUNTAIN.

I CAN GET TO HER.
NEGATIVE, BRICK.

I'M ALL HOVER, COMMANDER. NO THRUST. USELESS IN A DOG FIGHT.
LESS USEFUL AGAINST FOUR.
WE NEED COLA.
SEND HER BACK OVER THE PEAK.

COLA?
I HEARD.
ON MY WAY.


TUNK!
TUNK!
TUNK!

HE'S LOCKED ON ME.

BOOKKA!BOOKKA!BOOKKA!

I'VE GOT HIM, GIRL.

KEEP BURNING.

FWOOM!

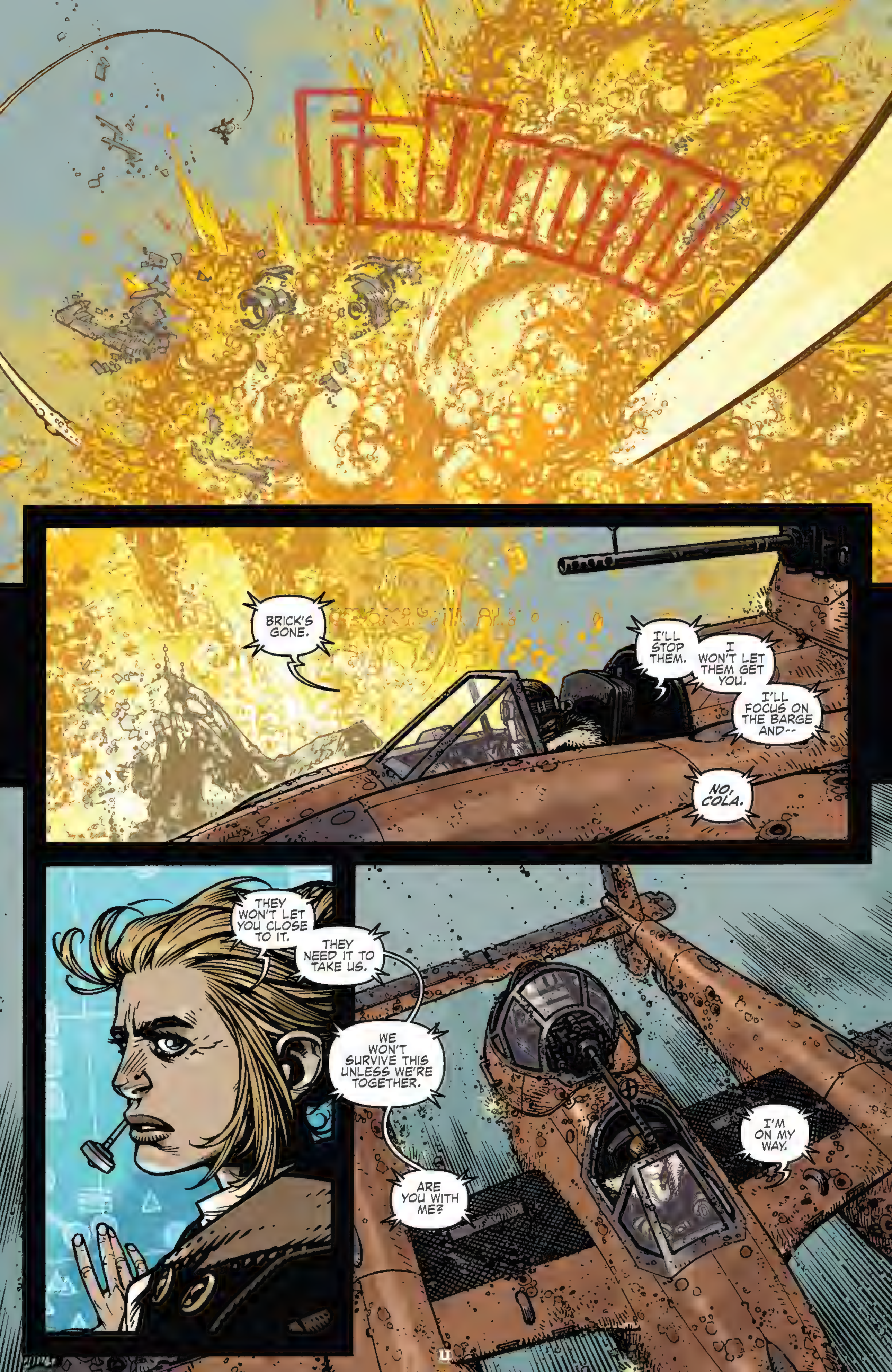
THANKS, BRICK.

I'M COMING BACK AROUND.

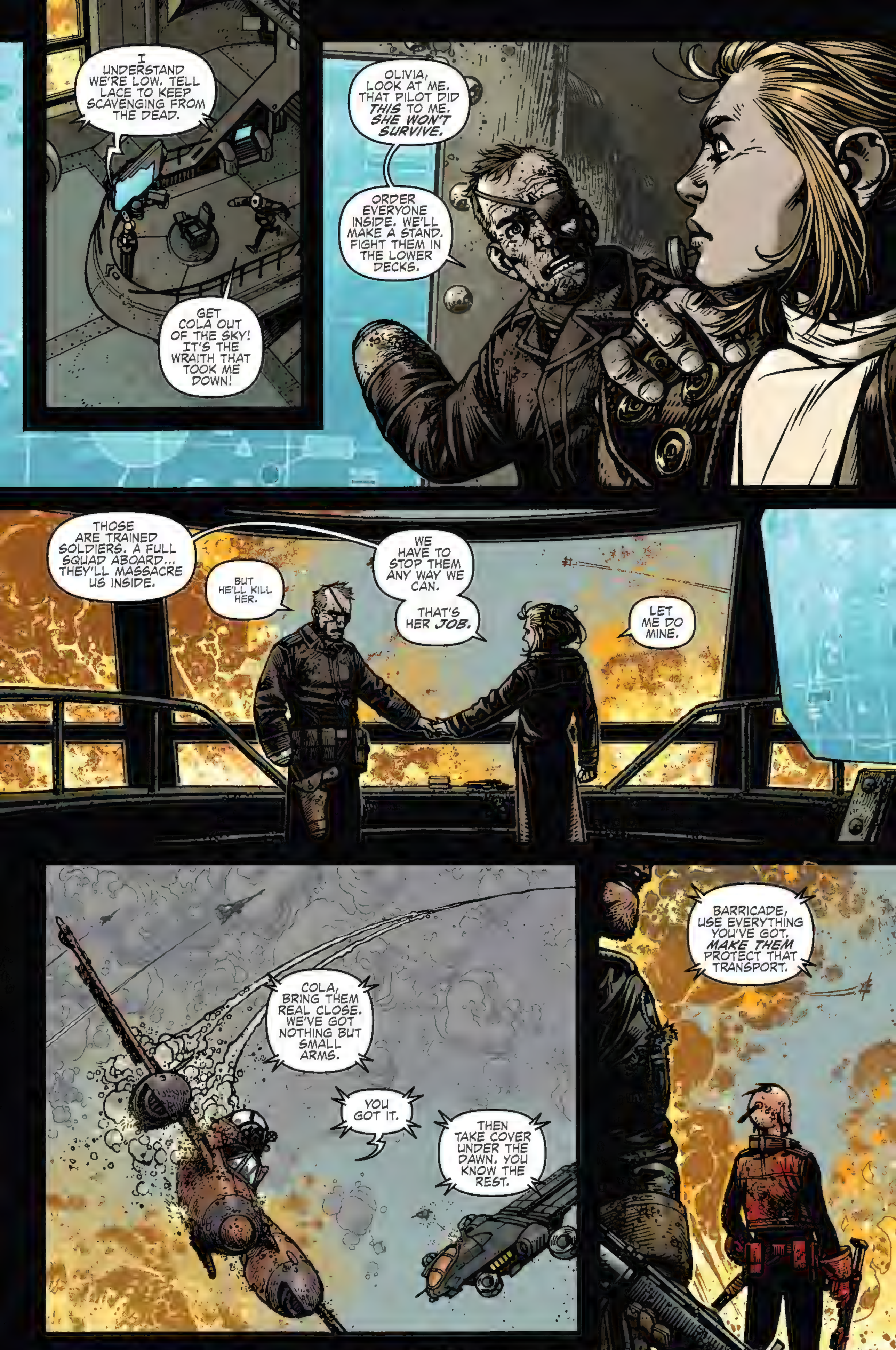
NEGATIVE.

GET BACK TO THE DAWN. I'M--

BOOKKA!BOOKKA!BOOKKA! BOOKKA!BOOKKA!BOOKKA! BOOKKA!BOOKKA!BO


BRICK'S GONE.
I'LL STOP THEM.
I WON'T LET THEM GET YOU.
I'LL FOCUS ON THE BARGE AND--
NO, COLA.
THEY WON'T LET YOU CLOSE TO IT.
THEY NEED IT TO TAKE US.
WE WON'T SURVIVE THIS UNLESS WE'RE TOGETHER.
ARE YOU WITH ME?
I'M ON MY WAY.

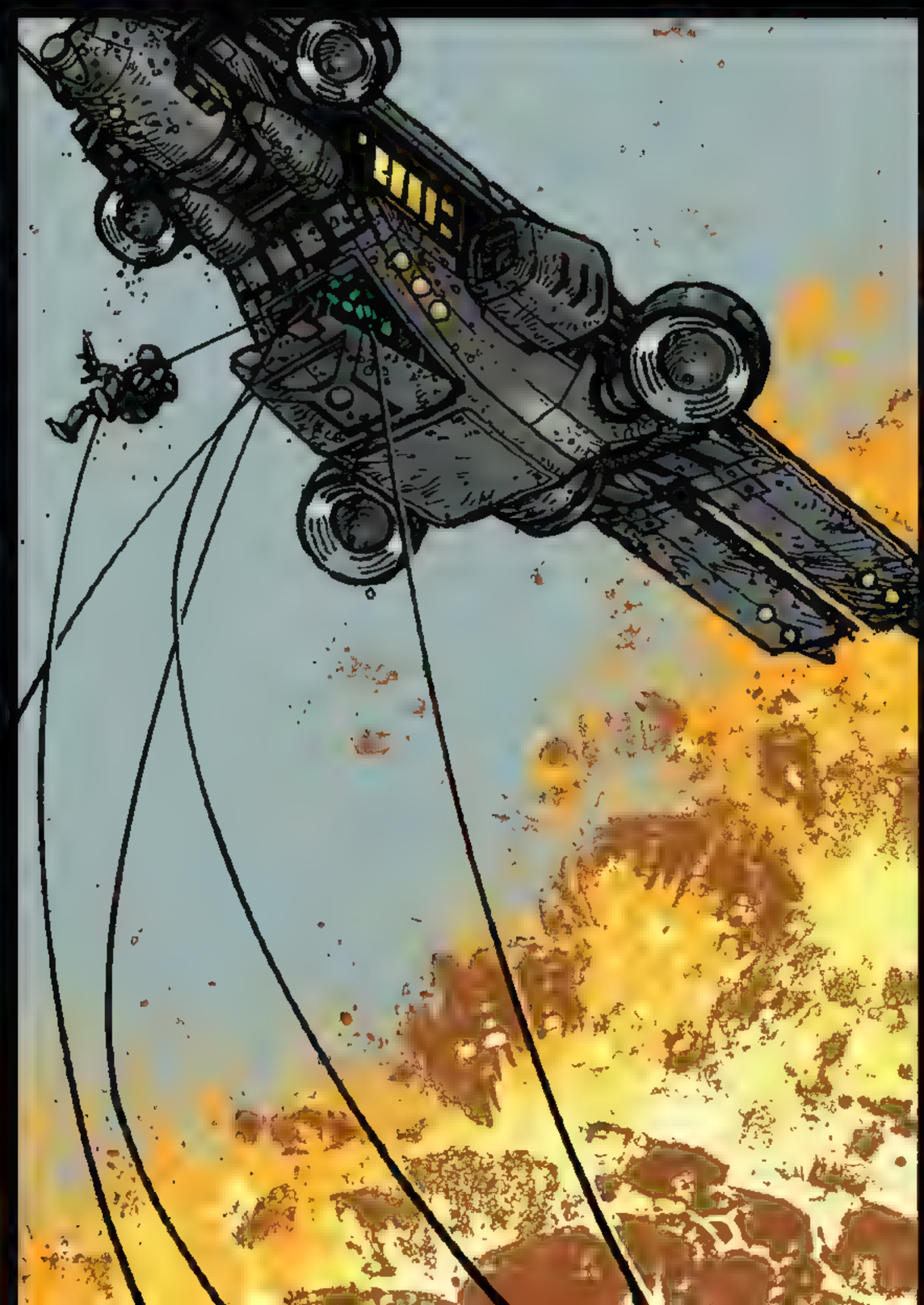
DAMMIT OLIVIA--
--WHERE'S OUR GIRL?
THERE SHE IS.
ROOF!
NO...
BC, WHAT IS IT?
BC!
SCRAM? I NEED YOU READY TO FLY.
I SEE 'EM. I'LL KEEP COLA CLEAN, OLIVIA.
NOT YOUR JOB THIS TIME. YOU'VE GOT A DIFFERENT PRIORITY.


I UNDERSTAND WE'RE LOW. TELL LACE TO KEEP SCAVENGING FROM THE DEAD.
GET COLA OUT OF THE SKY! IT'S THE WRAITH THAT TOOK ME DOWN!
OLIVIA, LOOK AT ME. THAT PILOT DID THIS TO ME. SHE WON'T SURVIVE.
ORDER EVERYONE INSIDE. WE'LL MAKE A STAND. FIGHT THEM IN THE LOWER DECKS.
THOSE ARE TRAINED SOLDIERS. A FULL SQUAD ABOARD... THEY'LL MASSACRE US INSIDE.
BUT HE'LL KILL HER.
WE HAVE TO STOP THEM ANY WAY WE CAN.
THAT'S HER JOB.
LET ME DO MINE.
COLA, BRING THEM REAL CLOSE. WE'VE GOT NOTHING BUT SMALL ARMS.
YOU GOT IT.
THEN TAKE COVER UNDER THE DAWN. YOU KNOW THE REST.
BARRICADE, USE EVERYTHING YOU'VE GOT. MAKE THEM PROTECT THAT TRANSPORT.

DRRKK
DRRKK
DRRKK

WRAITHS, FORM A PERIMETER.
CLEAR THE DECK!
JUDGE, WE'RE TAKING SMALL ARMS FIRE FROM THEIR BARRICADE.

GO! NOW!



JUDGE! TARGET REACQUIRED! FROM BENEATH THE--

WOOOOMP
BOARDING CREW, DO NOT STOP NO MATTER WHAT, EVERYTHING DEPENDS ON YOU GETTING TO THE COMMAND DECK.

NOW, SCRAM!

MOVING.

BOARDING CRAFT, A JETPACKER IS MOVING TOWARDS YOUR RAMP!

WHUMP!

UNNNFF.

SPAT!

SPAT!

SPAT! SPAT!

SPAT!

THUD

BLAM!

SCRAM!

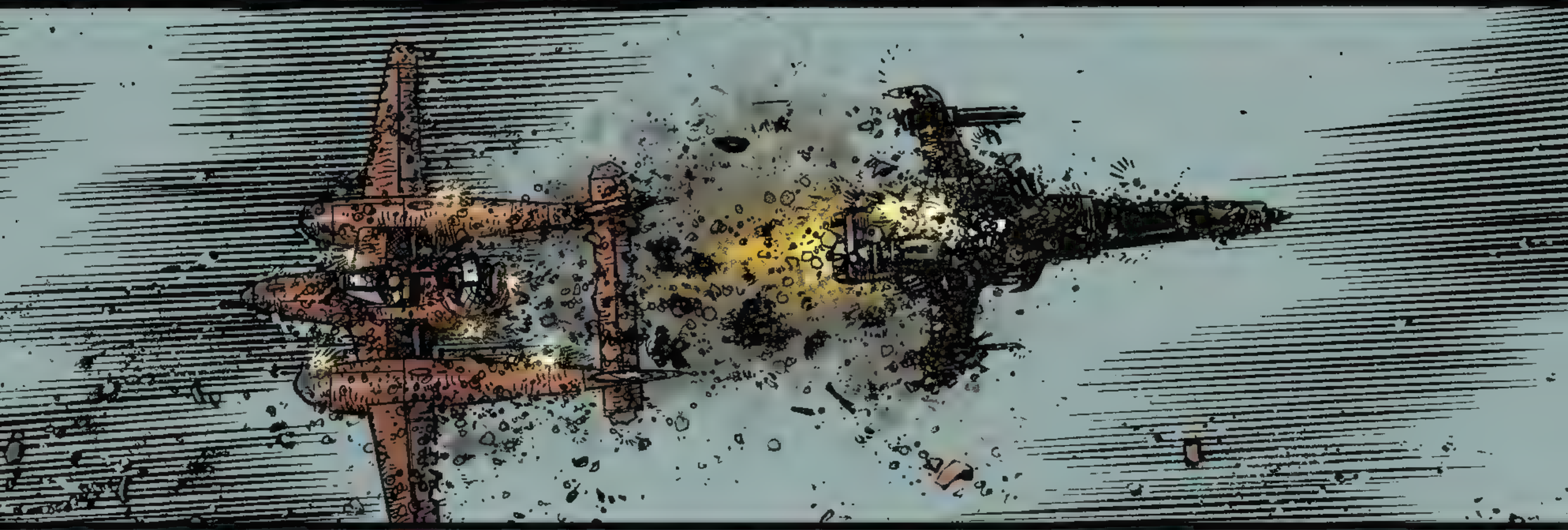
OOF.

CHOMP!

RAAAAAAA!

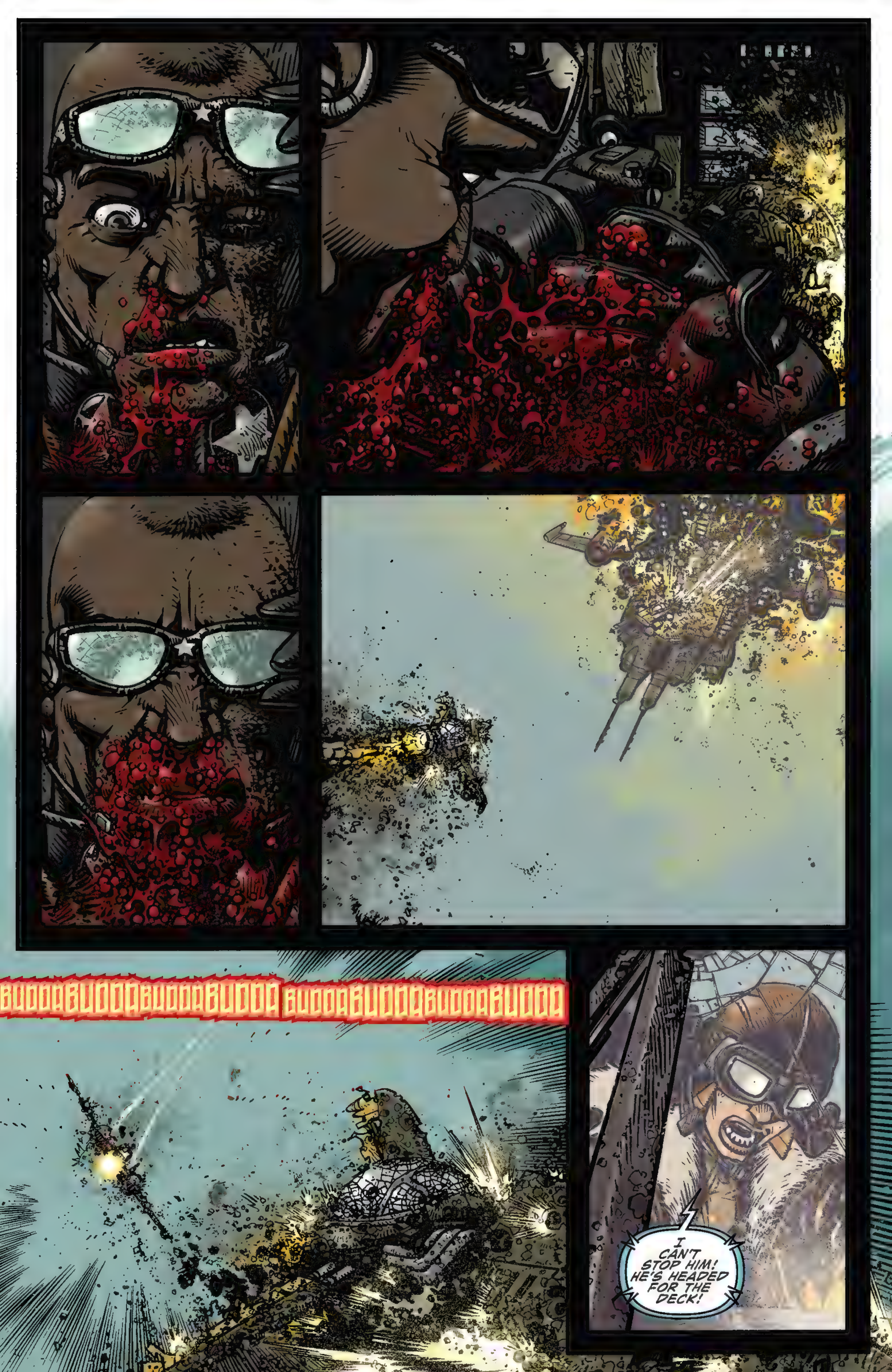
JUST DIE!

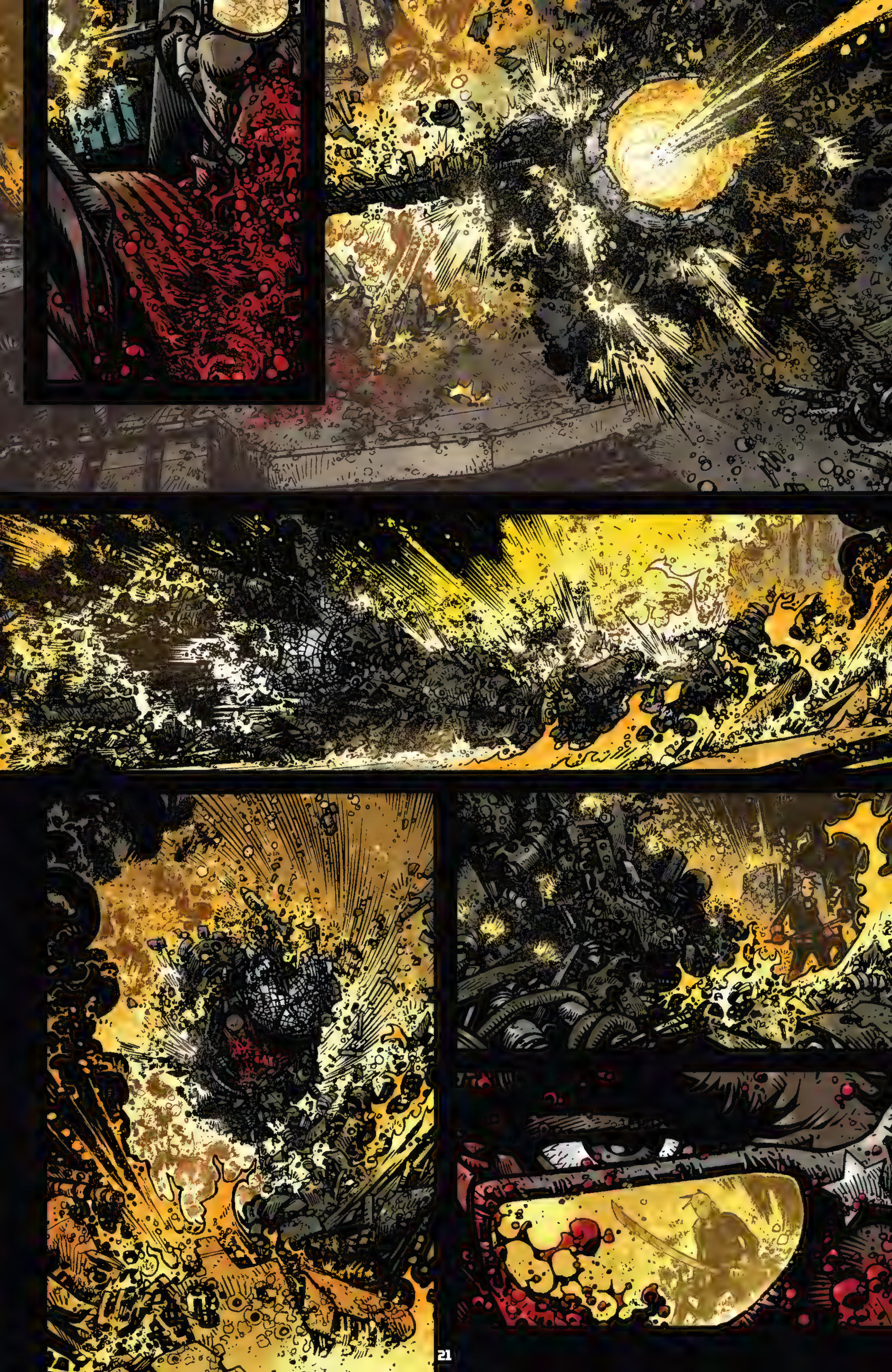
BUDDABUDDABUDDA BUDDABUDDABUDDABUDDA BUDDABUDDABU



COLA? ARE YOU WHOLE?

YEAH. I THINK SO.


BUDDABUDDABUDDABUDDA BUDDABUDDABUDDABUDDA
I CAN'T STOP HIM! HE'S HEADED FOR THE DECK!



DAD, HOW IS EVERYONE?
WE'LL SURVIVE. WE ALWAYS DO.
SCRAM'S OK?
HE'S WITH CRITTER. BANGED UP BUT WHOLE.
WHERE'S--
SHE'S RIGHT OVER THERE.

REQUEST PERMISSION TO GO BACK FOR TUG.
HE'S SMART. HE MIGHT HAVE GOTTEN OUT BEFORE IT CRASHED.
WE COULD REFUEL MY PLANE AND MAKE A PASS.

COLA...

NO.
I KNOW HE'S GONE, MOM.

COLA

A WEEK LATER...

HI, CRITTER.

BEAUTIFUL DAY, ISN'T IT?
COLA
END.

D.R. & QUINCH

JOIN THE EMPIRE, FREE THERMONUCLEAR WEAPONRY - S'RIGHT !!!! (CONDITIONS APPLY)

K6 NW